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ZIONISM:

A JEWISH STATEMENT
TO
THE CHRISTIAN WORLD



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ZIONISM:

A JEWISH STATEMENT TO THE CHRISTIAN WORLD.

Zionism strives to obtain for the Jewish people a legally secured, publicly recognized home in Palestine.

Zionism is the solution of the Jewish question proposed by Jews.

The Jewish question involves many problems directly affecting the Jewish people, and indirectly society as a whole. Some of those problems are common to all nations, but all of them are intensified by the peculiar position which the Jew occupies in the economy of the world. Thus, other nations have a mass of poverty with which they have to deal, arising from conditions of the labor-market or from uneven conditions of supply and demand. These affect the Jewish proletariat too, but in addition there are the consequences which result from nearly one-half of Jewry being confined within the pale of settlement in Russia and Poland, and there restricted and harassed by exceptional laws. The opportunities afforded to these people for education, for physical and moral development, and material progress in life, are severely limited by these exceptional laws; while from time to time they are exposed to systematic brutal outrage and massacre. Other nations are confronted with the sight of thousands of their people leaving their native soil for other lands. But, whereas these for the most part leave of their own free will, impelled by a spirit of adventure and an ambition to better their material condition which is at least tolerable, the thousands of Russian and Polish Jews who leave their native land, are forced away by conditions that do not result from the prevailing economic circumstances,

but which emanate for the most part from the special legal status into which they are born, and which they find unbearable.

These exceptional laws would obviously not be of any practical effect, nor would such occurrences as have recently appalled civilization be possible, were the Jews of the countries in which they exist not regarded as an alien population.

At first sight it would appear as if all that is needed is a removal of Jews from countries in which they are compelled to live under exceptional laws or in which they suffer persecution to those in which free institutions prevail; and this indeed has been the means adopted by individual Jews for their own liberation. During the last twenty-five years upwards of a million Jews it is computed, have left Russia for other countries, chiefly for America. But this migration has not ended the difficulty. Like previous migrations of Jews, it has produced fresh trouble. These large numbers of poor Jews are, at best, not welcome in the places to which they migrate. Their immigration is not that of merely of an alien people who, whatever temporary inconvenience may be caused by their arrival, will soon merge in the general population of their new home. The immigration of Jews is different. They form or augment a body differentiated from the general population. This is not because of any tendency to stand apart politically, for they are most desirous of proving themselves patriots in their new homes. Indeed this characteristic of the Jew has been constantly testified equally in peace as in war, and he does not shirk the sternest obligations of citizenship. But as a matter of fact they remain a separate people. If they succeed in their new homes, they become, as Jews, the butt for anti-semitic feeling, in one form or another, even in countries renowned for their free institutions. If they fail, they are pointed at, as Jews as a burden, wantonly added to the country in which they settle. Thus it is seen that, so far as the greater proportion of the Jews of the world is concerned, they cannot live worthy lives in the

countries of their birth, and when they exchange them for others, they lay up for themselves a crop of fresh troubles, affecting not only their fellow-Jews, but also the populations into the midst of which they immigrate.

England, for instance, is justly renowned among the nations of the world for her free institutions and absence of racial or religious bias. Yet, in the course of the debate on the Aliens Bill, the then Prime Minister (MR. BALFOUR), referring to the immigration of Jews into England, felt constrained to declare that "a state of things could easily be imagined in which it would not be to the advantage of the civilization of the country that there should be an immense body of persons who, however patriotic, able and industrious, however much they threw themselves into the national life, still by their own action remained a people apart, and not merely held a religion differing from the vast majority of their fellow-countrymen, but only intermarried among themselves."

It must be obvious, therefore, that Jews, even in free countries, are to some extent placed under a ban of social separateness, even where politically and legally there is no difference made in regard to them. Clearly mere migration will not solve the Jewish question,—migration is at best only a shifting of the trouble.

Would the difficulty be met by the assimilation of the Jew, that is, by his absorption in other populations?

It is of course evident that with the ceasing of the Jew, as such, the Jewish question would end. But, there are many points to be taken into consideration in regard to such a suggestion. For one thing, it is an altogether unworthy and contemptible means of solving the question. Only the infamous overcome the difficulties caused by those who are a trouble to them, by murder, or the even meaner method of compelling to suicide, and the attempt to extinguish a nation, or forcing it to extinguish itself by assimilation, is the gravest of social crimes. But, in the case of the Jews it

would also be singularly unwise. For, most of the trouble caused by Jews is traceable to Jewish virtues, as when for instance the Jew successfully competes with the people around him, outstrips them and thus evokes their passionate jealousy. Or it is to be traced to Jewish virtues arbitrarily turned by other peoples into vicious courses,—as for instance usurious practices and the desire for amassing wealth quickly. Would it not be unwise to endeavor to rid the world of this clever, persistent people, instead of endeavoring to make the best use of them for the common good, by giving their natural talents the amplest scope for free development?

But, how could this assimilation be brought about? Persecution, in forms which to-day humanity has rejected even towards Jews, has been tried, is being tried. It but tends to keep Jews the more separate, the more unassimilated. Persecution always has been and is to-day a centripetal force for Jews. The Jew quite naturally refuses to commit race-suicide because he is persecuted for the Jewish nature is not cowardly. It has a hatred of persecution and cruelty and violence: how then is it likely that the Jew will assimilate with those who exhibit to him exactly those characteristics?

Toleration and freedom of thought would have a much greater effect in respect to the assimilation of the Jew. But, before these are generally extended to him all those hostile sentiments towards him on the part of the peoples among whom he lives and from which he has suffered for twenty centuries must first disappear. Indeed the obliteration of those sentiments, their mere negation would not be sufficient. For this toleration and freedom of thought exercised towards the Jew, would give him greater opportunities in directions in which the application by him of the lesser opportunities available to him are now keenly resented. So that the prejudice towards the Jew would not only have to disappear, but it would have to be replaced by a love that would be severely a

tested and tried in its most vulnerable points. It is doubtful whether this is within the range of practical consideration even in the case of the most advanced civilizations. But the bulk of the Jews live amongst the most backward of European nations. A thought given to the Russian moujik, his up-bringing, his mental subjection to an intolerant priesthood, his dense environment of superstition and prejudice, must convince anyone that the assimilation of the Jew through toleration and freedom of thought is a chimera. No one surely who has read of the recent massacres of Jews in Russia will venture the opinion that in Russia there is much chance of a love for the Jew becoming a prevailing sentiment towards him in that country.

There is, however, yet another side to this suggestion. With whom is the Jew of Eastern Europe to assimilate, if he is to assimilate at all? Clearly with the Russian moujik or the Galician or Polish peasant. But this is a proposal that a superior race shall become absorbed by a greatly inferior, a stronger by a weaker, a sober by a particularly unsober one, and is altogether contrary to the course of race absorptions. The Jew too has no mean opinion of the status of his race in the world. Purer than most it is one of the oldest: its preservation is part, a great part, of his religious belief. He does not readily yield it even to advanced civilizations.

Since then assimilation is impracticable, what remains to settle the Jewish question,—to settle it, that is, on lines worthy of consideration?

We have a people which cannot assimilate amongst the populations in the midst of which it finds itself and whose segregation, the result of non-assimilation, proves offensive. Mere conformity to general customs, even political and social identification, do not entirely remove, however much they may temporarily palliate, the difficulty. Nay, it is frequently found that this conformity is itself a ground for complaint, and that nations with Jewish populations

regard it with suspicion. There is no necessity to dwell at length on this point. Anti-semitism, ancient and modern, in all its varied forms is the proof thereof.

These were some of the considerations which led Dr. HERZL in his pamphlet "A Jewish State" to enquire what it is that Jews lack as compared with other peoples who are geographically, ethnologically or historically separate. And he came to the conclusion that the root of the Jewish trouble is to be found in the fact that Jews have not a true centrum, that they do not to-day form, in the full sense, a nation. They are thus in an altogether inconsistent position, bound one to another by a subconscious national sympathy it is true, but by a national sympathy which many of them not only do not desire to recognize, but which when presented to them they hide and gloze over with excuses. The reason of this is, that under present conditions Jewish national sympathy is not seemingly in accord with, but appears opposed to the local sympathy which the Jew must fain feel for the country of his birth and residence, and, being in reality based upon the Jew's actual past and his potential future, appeals but little to a people who, endowed with a strong vein of idealism, naturally constantly strive to show themselves above all things practical.

Now, the finding for the Jew of a centrum—the setting up of a Jewish state—would go largely to remedy this. It would raise the status of the Jew everywhere, and relationship with it would mean for every Jew a constant source of patriotic pride. The Jew would come to be regarded not as he is now, a mere homeless wanderer, a person holding a religious belief in blind, obstinate defiance of prevailing creeds, but as a man claiming kinship with a people whose national activity and development would in its special sphere be doing service to the world at large. The pivot of Jewry around which the life of the Jewry of the world would revolve, would not be as it is now a population of Jews under the conditions existent in Russia, or even a Jewish population under the best conditions at

present possible, as for instance in England, or America or Holland, where the Jew is taught to be thankful and content—and is—because wide “toleration” is extended to him. The pivot of Jewry would instead be a population working out its destiny as a nation under conditions of free political institutions, and the effect would be manifest on individual Jews the world over. An English authoress said quite truly: “Our dignity and rectitude are proportioned to our sense of relationship to something great, admirable, pregnant with high possibilities, worthy of sacrifice, a continual inspiration to self-repression and discipline by the presentation of aims larger and more attractive to our generous part than the securing of personal ease or prosperity.” It is precisely these “aims larger and more attractive than securing of personal ease and prosperity” which Zionism seeks to provide for the Jewish people. To-day their relationship as Jews with something great is for the most part legendary and historical, and for the rest a nebulous nexus, partly racial, partly religious. Nothing so surely as national life and national institutions endows a people with those “high possibilities” that raise men above their selfish selves. The securing of these to the Jew would indeed be Jewish emancipation, not for any one class or for those living in any one country, but for Jews everywhere, all the world over. It can surely be nothing less than a task worthy of the highest statesmanship to emancipate eleven millions of fellow-creatures and to place them in a position in which they can give to the world and for the world the best that is in them.

It will be seen that Zionism is not a philanthropic plan. Indeed, Zionists can very cogently point to the necessity for continuous efforts of philanthropy, which the present Jewish situation forces upon Jews, as an additional argument in support of their contentions. However valuable a virtue spontaneous charity may be in the one who gives, its permanent application as a system must tend to the demoralization of those who learn to rely upon its receipt

as well as those who are brought to think of it as an universal heal-all. In the case of Jews however the receiving of charity is the less extensive part of the injury done, for in them there is largely developed an innate spirit of ambition and personal independence, and they do not easily sink into chronic pauperism. The more serious moral damage is done to those are willing to assist only with eleemosynary aid. With them philanthropy quickly becomes a policy and is relied upon as an easy method of shirking more permanent and ennobling means for the good of their people. From this aspect the Jewish people can, for the majority, be divided into three classes: those who give charity, those who receive it, and the large middle class whose chief aim is to be able to give and not compelled to receive. For none of the three does the philanthropic idea form an ennobling ideal.

Equally will it be seen that Zionism is something more than a mere emigrating and colonizing scheme. It is for that reason that Zionists regard Palestine as essential for the purposes they have in view. Palestine may or may not be the best place to which to direct emigration, but with its ancient historic associations which the Jew has fostered for thousands of years as a religious duty, it alone can become the true national centrum for the Jewish people in the future. An attempt at the migration or concentration of Jews elsewhere can never result in more than a colonization, which will attract comparatively only the few, and will exercise no general influence upon the Jewish people as a whole. There is little necessity here to amplify the argument. Palestine has through the centuries, exile notwithstanding, been regarded by Jews as "our land"—towards it they turn in the sacred hour of prayer, in joy and in sorrow; what to them is "our land" has never been absent from the mind and heart of Jews as a people. "Our land"—Palestine—means to them what "our land" means to other peoples—the centre of national patriotic aspiration. And it is exactly Jewish patriotism upon which Zionists rely as the fulcrum

with which they hope to raise the status of the Jew, to supply the motive power whereby he will become everywhere respected as a Jew, instead of being in most places despised and where best off, pitied and "tolerated."

And now as to the means which Zionists suggest for the accomplishment of their aims.

Naturally such aims can be reached only by a gradual and slow process. Zionists recognize the vast difficulties of the work that lies before them and realize the compass of their potential activities. But they believe they will be best serving their people and the world at large by placing the Jewish question on lines which are the right ones towards a settlement of the Jewish problem. Part of their preliminary work is the impressing on the minds and hearts of Jews the fact that for those who cannot or will not assimilate with the peoples of the lands in which they dwell their one hope worthy of fostering is in the national ideal, while not neglecting to point out the dangers and difficulties of assimilation to those so inclined. They constantly endeavor to explain all that the national ideal means for the Jew, and the hopelessness and unworthiness of all other methods suggested for solving the Jewish problem. They invite all Jews to see that the problem is one which intimately concerns not one section only, but the whole of the Jewish people. They endeavor to foster among Jews a love for Jewish literature, and a right appreciation of Jewish culture.

Zionists are by no means oblivious of the stress and pressure caused to Jews by the terrible misery to which persecution has in some places reduced them, nor the immediate help which can be rendered to a section of Jews by their migration from countries where to-day life itself is by no means sure and existence well-nigh unbearable. But they are naturally desirous of guarding against the inherent dangers of any emigration or colonization plans which may tend to defer the real settlement, the national settlement, of the Jewish difficulty. They would welcome any well-conceived

scheme of emigration which would take our people to the neighboring lands of Palestine, as European and Asiatic Turkey, Mesopotamia, Cyprus, Egypt, more especially if such plan contained the recognition of Jewish nationality. Such a proposal would be regarded by Zionists as part of the larger policy they advocate, and the fact that it would render immediate relief to some of the Jewish people would of course be an additional argument in their eyes in its favor. It is needless to say that Zionists in urging the moral value of Zionism, do not in the least ignore the material help to Jews which would follow the success of the Zionist plan. And a first step in this direction would be the making of Palestine more fit for economic and commercial development, the husbanding and cultivation of its resources, so that material as well as sentimental considerations shall draw Jews thither. What can be done in Palestine under its present conditions must be relatively small. There is not only no encouragement but absolute discouragement. Would it not be possible to secure the introduction of reforms in Palestine, similar to the reforms, say, that have been carried out in the Lebanon province? This alone would at once be the signal for a great force of Jewish energy to be directed on the country. With this purpose in view the Zionist organization founded the Jewish Colonial Trust with an authorized capital of two millions sterling and its subsidiary company the Anglo-Palestine Company which is now at work in Palestine. It is quite certain that reforms of the nature of those suggested, would attract Jewish capital from all over the world to that land in a far stronger manner than would be the case with any similar commercial ventures founded anywhere else. The reforms in Palestine besides, are urgent apart altogether from Zionists aims, and in the interests of good government ought not to be delayed.

But, it is often objected, His Majesty the Sultan would be opposed to such reforms, exactly because they would tend to foster

Zionist aims. Why should he? Zionist aims in Palestine are not in the least incompatible with, but are entirely consistent with Palestine remaining forever a province of the Turkish Empire. Nationality such as Zionists are striving to set up in Palestine by Jews and for Jews is not identical with an independent government. There is a nationality in Canada and in Australia, as there is in India, and they are encouraged by the British Government. These peoples are loyal to the British crown just by reason of the freedom which has been given them to develop their own national existence. They have obtained it gradually and have justified their claims to it. Jews wish for nothing more than this same opportunity extended to themselves in Palestine. Thus the Turkish Government would gradually turn Palestine from an almost uncultivated, and certainly from an undeveloped, land attracting for the most part, so far as Jews are concerned, fanatics, beggars, paupers, and the decrepit who go there to die, into a province, the great natural resources of which would quickly be cultivated and which would attract the capital, the energy, the brains of the very best among the Jewish people.

The national existence Jews would build up in Palestine must not, as is so often the case, be gauged by biblical or post-biblical history. Two thousand years have passed since the latest of those days, and in point of civilization the Jew has been no RIP VAN WINKLE. The Jew in Palestine if vouchsafed the opportunities for national development would, *mutatis mutandis*, not be behind his Western brothers in all that is understood by social civilization. It would be a modern state which Jews would set up in Palestine, with the supreme advantage of having its roots deep down in history and tradition, the oldest upon which any modern social fabric is based.

To the world at large the advantages of the accomplishment of the Zionist ideal would be very great. Apart from higher considerations, the Jewish question always cropping up, now in the

form of bestial outrage and massacre, now in the form of some wild anti-semitic agitation, and anon in the form of persistent social prejudice against Jews, must be singularly unpleasant to the statesmen responsible for the various governments of the world. It would surely be a relief to have this vexatious and wearisome subject out of the way. But when higher considerations are taken into account, the release of eleven millions of human beings from conditions under which, save in a few altogether exceptional cases, their best qualities can be said to develop, where they do, only in spite of them, and their being replaced by conditions which would give those qualities encouragement and free play—the putting a stop to the “baiting” of human beings, to the outrage and massacre to which Jews are subjected and which must be so repellant to Christian feeling and human sentiment—these are objects which cannot fail to arrest the attention of men whose life-long endeavor it is to leave the world a little more righteous, a little more just, a little less brutal and inhuman than they found it. This is the object of the highest statesmanship everywhere.

Zionists ask for a little consideration for the eleven million Jews scattered throughout the world, so that this people, after wandering in exile for two thousand years, may be enabled to evolve out of themselves a nation in their old historic Home, there to accomplish their fair share in the world's work for the betterment of mankind.